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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KINSHASA 001447

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SECURITY SECTOR REFORM: MOVING - WITH DIFFICULTY

Classified By: Ambassador Roger Meece. Reason 1.4 (b/d).

1. (C) Summary: Several meetings in the past week have featured significant discussions at senior levels regarding critically important Security Sector Reform programs. The Ambassador and President Kabila reviewed the subject September 2, a long September 6 CIAT/Espace Presidential underscored the need for further progress, and a Joint Security Commission meeting September 7 included detailed discussion of all major sector areas. Five integrated FARDC brigades have now been formed, but support is still a problem. Delays have been encountered in starting the next training cycle. The EU Security Mission has prepared an extensive plan to ensure salary payments and other support to integrated brigades; Kabila has given orders for expedited review and, hopefully, approval and implementation. South African-led military census efforts are advancing, and predictably showing greatly reduced number of actual soldiers from earlier estimates. The U.K. has promised to finance completion of the exercise, which ideally can be finished by the end of November. Large-scale DDR programs finally seem to be moving forward in something approaching the original plan, although major challenges remain. Disarmament and repatriation of foreign combatants remains a major concern. End summary.

#### Security Sector on Numerous Agendas

2. (C) The security sector and elections are the center points of the Congolese transition. This cables summarizes discussions of key security sector issues that were discussed in several meetings over the past week, including a one-on-one Ambassador/President Kabila meeting September 2, a four and a half hour September 6 meeting involving the sixteen Ambassadors/Charges of the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT) and the Espace Presidentiel (President Kabila and the four GDRC Vice Presidents), and a GDRC/international community Joint Security Sector Commission meeting September 7. The major areas covered in these discussions included the effort underway to form integrated brigades and a national army; the associated disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program; Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) pay and support issues, including substantial European Security Mission findings and proposals; military census programs; and military deployment problems and constraints.

3. (C) The weakness of FARDC capacity and the central importance to the DRC transition process of effective reform are universally recognized in Kinshasa. More difficult is finding timely and effective solutions. The Ambassador discussed the problem with President Kabila in their September 2 meeting. The Ambassador emphasized that FARDC Chief of Staff General Kisempia shows no signs of interest in addressing serious support issues, but rather throws up a screen of excuses why progress has not been recorded. Kabila took note, commenting that the problems have been entrenched in the Zaire/Congo army for years and that a "new breed" of officers has to be developed to change the overall mindset. Separately, EmbOffs have been told by Presidency staff that Kabila has been ready for some time to get rid of Kisempia, but is not happy about the logical successor, current Air Force Commander John Numbi. In recent days, Presidency staff have contacted the U.S. and other embassies seeking evidence of Kisempia's direct involvement in salary skimming or other corrupt practices, and have also indicated that Kabila is looking at options that are politically viable to appoint a better prospect as FARDC Chief of Staff. (Comment: Kabila's reservations about Numbi are well-founded. Numbi has been busy trying to build his own rival power base, and his name has been suggested by the U.K. for inclusion in a potential arms-trafficking sanctions list, although we are not aware of any evidence at this point of Numbi's active involvement in arms trafficking. Given the unsteady nature of the GDRC Transition Government, changing the FARDC Chief of Staff can provoke major tensions and possibly disruption within the GDRC. That said, while Kisempia's removal would not automatically translate into a solution of FARDC corruption problems, it would represent a positive step. End comment.)

#### Creating an Integrated Army

4. (C) The military integration process is at the heart of security sector reforms, and it deservedly received

substantial discussion in recent meetings. Five FARDC integrated brigades have now been formally trained and put in place, working toward a goal of 18 integrated brigades to be formed and deployed before 2006 elections. (Note: This does not include the 2,500 FARDC troops that de facto have been trained by the MONUC Pakistani brigade in South Kivu province and are not part of any integrated FARDC brigades. End note.) The integrated brigades are urgently needed in Ituri District and North and South Kivu to conduct operations, but significant - and familiar - deployment and support problems have been encountered. The Fourth Brigade, recently completing training at the Mushaki integration center, for example, was struck with a cholera epidemic while being deployed to Ituri District. Compounding the problem, troops and dependents not hospitalized in Beni (North Kivu) were taken to a site near Bunia (Ituri District, Orientale Province) and placed there in quarantine, but without food, shelter or other essentials. At the September 6 CIAT/Espace Presidentiel meeting, Vice President Z, Ahidi Ngoma charged that up to 1,000 ex-RCD troops had deserted this brigade, a charge vehemently denied by Vice President Ruberwa and Defense Minister Onusumba. Defense Minister Onusumba was also put on the spot in the September 7 Joint Commission meeting, seeking to explain measures being taken to investigate what went wrong with this deployment and the steps underway to address the problems. MONUC has been attempting to help to the degree it can in the interim, at least with food.

15. (C) The Angolan-trained Third Brigade from the Kitona center has still not been deployed to its designated station in South Kivu. Security officials asserted at the September 7 meeting that the problem continues to be a lack of air transport for the troops and equipment, a problem also affecting the Belgium/South Africa-trained Second Brigade trained in Kamina, destined for North Kivu. (Note: Given the distances involved and lack of roads, surface movements for these deployments are not feasible.) The Kamina brigade is also still lacking some equipment which is being supplied and is en route from Belgium. Both brigades are urgently needed, as neither North nor South Kivu as of yet have any FARDC integrated brigades in place. In both the September 6 and 7 meetings, the need to find rapid answers to the deployment problems was strongly reiterated.

16. (C) Vice President Ruberwa also initiated discussion at the Joint Commission regarding roadblocks to getting combatants into place to start the next cycle of integration training. Only a relative handful of the combatants designated to report are yet in the training centers. Problems identified as delaying progress include delays in assigning personnel (primarily EU and MONUC) to oversee the collection and processing of weapons, although all teams are as of this week reportedly now in place. There also appears to be confusion in some areas as to who is to report and how. Some units not designated for this cycle are reportedly waiting to be processed, while soldiers in other units which are designated do not seem to have all needed information. Ruberwa directed, and Defense Minister Onusumba and the FARDC Military Integration Service (SMI) commander undertook, to resolve the problem quickly. Previous problems of how to ensure the transport of soldiers to processing centers for sorting into those being demobilized and those being integrated have now also been solved, in an agreement struck with the World Bank which is heavily involved in the demobilization effort.

17. (SBU) On a more positive note, the SMI Commander reported that all integration centers have now been provisioned with food and other supplies, a major improvement over the previously existing situation. The organization in charge of DDR, CONADER, also reported that its corresponding DDR sites are ready to proceed. SMI also reported that a Dutch General (being financed by Holland) has also just arrived on detail to SMI to assist with organization and operations.

DDR - Starting to Get On Track

18. (C) CONADER indicates that it has at this point in excess of 20,000 people involved in DDR activities, plus another roughly 6,000 former child soldiers involved in community reintegration. The bulk of this figure, however, comes from former Ituri militia members who submitted to DDR programs as a result of MONUC/FARDC First Integrated Brigade operations in recent months. CONADER reported that it has largely solved payment issues and is now able to supply at least most promised payments to those being demobilized, except in Ituri District. Ruberwa pointedly noted that Ituri arguably represents the most urgent location where payments are needed to ensure the former militiamen do not revert to armed activity. CONADER noted that agreements are nearing completion with the World Bank and implementing partners that will enable Ituri programs to go forward. The Ambassador noted in the September 7 meeting that USAID is strongly engaged in this effort, with a substantial commitment of USD

2 million to supplement a World Bank USD 4 million to implement effective Ituri reintegration activities as quickly as possible.

19. (SBU) CONADER also reported that it is now ready to begin receiving soldiers who are designated for demobilization from the integration "orientation centers", in accordance with the original integration/DDR model. That model had been severely distorted in recent months by multiple "emergency plans" largely put in place following Rwanda's threats in late 2004 to stage cross-border unilateral military action. The South Africans reported at the September 7 meeting that their military census activity has already indentified 25,693 soldiers in active duty ranks in seven military districts as preferring, or being selected for, disarmament.

#### Salaries and Support - EU Report

10. (U) The familiar topic of salary payments and needed support for FARDC troops was discussed in all three meetings. There has been little to no improvement to-date in this area; troops, including those in integrated brigades, are not receiving regular salary payments, nor ongoing essential support (e.g., food, supplies, etc). All key players recognize this as a major problem for FARDC effectiveness, and indeed a threat to Transition progress.

11. (C) Minister of Defense Onusumba in the CIAT/Espace Presidentiel meeting reported that the EU Security Mission in the DRC has completed a report on support questions, with extensive recommendations. Apparently equipped with a copy which was several inches thick, the Minister indicated that he intended to bring the report to the Government as soon as possible. President Kabila asked Onusumba to skip the usual step of discussing it in the Political Committee, and to save time instead by bringing it directly to the High Defense Council, which met the afternoon of September 7.

12. (C) Onusumba and EUSec head General Joanna briefed the Joint Security Commission September 7 on key elements of the report. In particular, they noted that pay reform proposals are keyed to separating FARDC line command functions from "chain of expenditure" responsibilities. In other words, control of salary and other payments is to be vested with individuals specifically charged with, and presumably trained for, ensuring disbursements are made as intended, taking control of the funds away from line commanders. This would, of course, preclude the traditional practice of Zairian/Congolese commanders skimming funds from the payroll, leaving little or no money to actually pay the troops. EUSec also has personnel to detail to the FARDC to help train and oversee implementation of its recommendations. Joanna noted that there are specific recommendations as to how funds should flow directly to brigades or affected units, as well as other aspects of financial controls to ensure support is provided.

13. (C) Both the Minister and EUSec chief emphasized that implementation of the pay and other changes should start with the integrated brigades. There is already a firm base line of how many soldiers are in these brigades and where they are deployed. In addition, there is a clear advantage to underscoring the advantage to soldiers of participation in an integrated FARDC brigade vice the former belligerent factional units.

#### Military Census - South African Progress

14. (U) At the September 7 meeting, a South African officer delivered a summary report of progress and findings to-date of the South African-supported military census program. This effort was launched to determine for the first time a firm base-line figure of the number of active duty combatants, as opposed to the inflated claimed figures that have long existed in all Congolese forces.

15. (C) The census has largely been completed in seven military districts, with four left to cover. A total of 95,052 soldiers have been identified to-date and equipped with I.D. badges. Of these, as noted in para 9, over 25,000 have been designated for the disarmament program, with roughly 69,350 tentatively scheduled for integration (Note: All soldiers will still be subject to processing through the orientation centers for a determination of selection for integration or demobilization). The South Africans did not report how many soldiers had been claimed in the units reviewed. Other reports, however, suggest that typically, between 30% and 50% of the claimed forces cannot be found. In the September 7 meeting, Vice President Ruberwa noted that even relatively high estimates for the remaining four military districts would bring the total number of soldiers to fewer than 150,000, with a significant portion of these to be demobilized. Other commentary during the discussion noted that the Presidential Guard (GSSP) is not included in the

inventory figures to-date. GSSP numbers are estimated to total between 12,000 - 15,000 soldiers, but these are not attached to specific military districts. Ruberwa expressed concern about the wide variance in the GSSP estimates.

16. (C) Defense Minister Onusumba also reported that an in-house FARDC inventory was coming up with significantly higher numbers of soldiers, likely totaling well in excess of 200,000. He noted that the Defense budget is continuing to bear the burden of payments to widows and children out of what amounts to active-duty pay allocations. Vice President Ruberwa suggested that the South African numbers are likely to be more accurate than the in-house numbers. He also noted that survivor payments should be transferred to other ministries.

17. (SBU) The outcome of the census will have a major impact on GDRC military pay allocations and systems. In theory, the greatly reduced number of supposed soldiers can permit a general increase in pay levels without raising the overall defense budget. Currently, enlisted soldiers are only scheduled to receive \$10/month, an amount that is clearly insufficient for a soldier and family. President Kabila told the Ambassador that the IMF has already been saying it wants the Defense budget reduced to correspond to the lower number of soldiers. The Ambassador told Kabila that he, and other colleagues in the CIAT, favor using the ostensible "savings" to increase soldiers, pay to more acceptable levels.

18. (C) Responding to a question, the South African officer reported that he hopes that the inventory exercise can be completed by the end of November. The UK Ambassador reported that the British government, responding to concerns about inadequate funds, is ready to finance completion of the South Africa-supported exercise.

#### USG Activities

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19. (SBU) The Ambassador briefed President Kabila regarding planned USG military cooperation efforts. Notably this includes training for between 100 and 300 battalion and brigade staff officers (Note: using Mobutu-era leftover FMF funds) hopefully to be implemented no later than January 2005. Kabila welcomed the planned training, and indeed anything more the U.S. could provide. In addition, the U.S. is planning a Defense Institute for Legal Studies (DIILS) counterterrorism seminar September 19-23 which will involve security and law enforcement personnel, as well as civil society representatives, to be financed by available counterterrorism funds the DATT identified. Some HIV/AIDS activities targeting the military are also in the pipeline.

#### Comment

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20. (SBU) Security sector reform in the DRC is an immense undertaking. The various components including training, DDR, census, pay and support reform, and redeployments all represent moving parts that must work to some degree in tandem to avoid the general machinery grinding to a halt. With very major investments from the Europeans, Angolans, and South Africans, the process is moving forward, albeit haltingly, and some measurable progress is being recorded. It is of critical importance to accelerate the reform activities, however, to ensure domestic security and operational effectiveness against various Congolese and foreign armed groups in eastern Congo, and to preclude a return to armed conflict by any party who might decide that the transition process and elections no longer serves his purpose.

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